

A scenic view of a city skyline, likely Arlington, Massachusetts, seen from a park bench. The foreground shows a green metal park bench and a concrete path. The middle ground is filled with trees in autumn colors (yellows, oranges, and greens). In the background, a dense city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

arlington master plan

YOUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Public Hearing
January 12, 2015

contents

- Introduction
- Master Plan process: organization & approach
- Statutory framework
- Master Plan content:
 - Key ideas
 - Findings
 - Goals
 - Priority recommendations

what is a master plan?

- Plan for community's physical evolution
- Comprehensive look at all aspects of community development
- Long-range (typically 10 years)
- Public policy document



master plans help to:

- Manage growth & change
- Provide for orderly, predictable development
- Protect environmental resources
- Strengthen local identity
- Set priorities for public facilities, infrastructure
- Provide guidance to land owners, developers, town boards

organization & approach

- Arlington Redevelopment Board
- Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC)
- Department of Planning & Community Development
- Consultants
 - RKG Associates
 - Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
 - Gamble Associates
 - Community Opportunities Group, Inc.
 - Ezra Glenn

state requirements

- G.L. c. 41, s. 81D
 - Goals & policies
 - Land use
 - Housing
 - Economic development
 - Natural resources
 - Historic resource areas
 - Open space & recreation
 - Services & facilities
 - Circulation & traffic
 - Implementation



master plan adoption

- Statutory authority:
 - Arlington Redevelopment Board (Planning Board)
 - Prepares, adopts, oversees implementation
 - No formal adoption procedures in statute
 - Communities follow local customs, traditions
- Some towns also seek Town Meeting endorsement



key ideas

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ARLINGTON COMMUNITY CONVERSATION



Guiding Principles: World Café, October 17, 2012

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Community meetings:
sequel to the World Café

June 3, 4, and 6 2013

Arlington High School

Cambridge Savings Bank

Hardy School



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Community survey

June 2013



- Residents value ...
 - Location
 - Walkability
 - Bike path
 - Family friendly
- Residents want to encourage ...
 - New businesses
 - Open space: maintain existing, provide more
 - Reduce carbon footprint
 - Demographic diversity

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Small-group interviews

May-August 2013

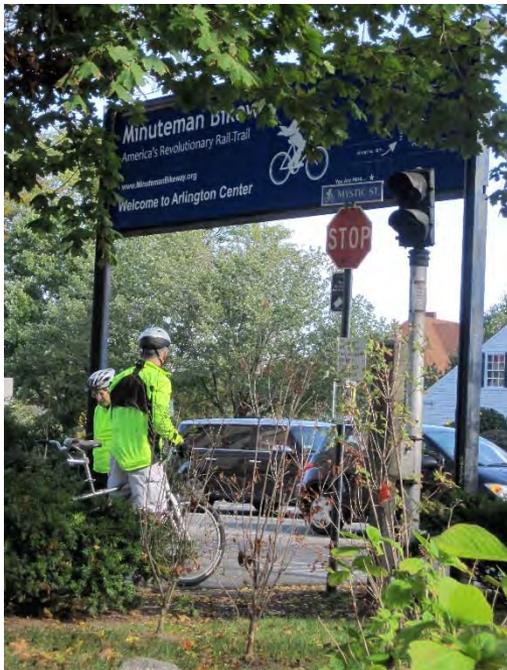


- Issues (frequently identified)
 - Residential tax burden
 - Traffic
 - Parking
 - Zoning & permitting
 - Housing affordability
 - Mansionization
 - Environmental quality (open space, water, flooding)
 - Need for more business development
 - Old v. new

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Small-group interviews

May-August 2013



- What has changed?
 - More restaurants (destination)
 - “Wet” town
 - Business mix
 - Demographics (no longer a “blue collar” town)
 - More accepting community
 - Young families
 - Bike path
 - Better schools
 - Less affordable
 - Too much housing



findings

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growth management & conservation

- Massachusetts Avenue
- Broadway
- Mill Brook

- Mugar Property
- Poet's Corner



town character

- Topography, water resources
- Massachusetts Avenue
- Unique neighborhoods
- Street trees, urban forest
- Historic civic spaces
 - Buildings
 - Grounds
 - Public art

local economy

- Highly skilled, well-educated labor force
- Business and employment growth
- Theatres
- Vibrant arts community
- History, tourism potential



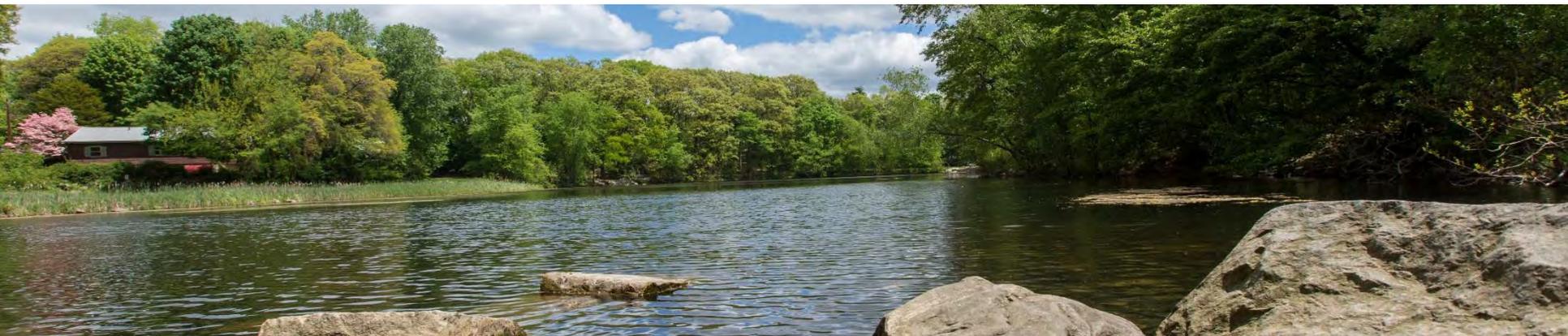
government

- Well-run, fiscally responsible
- Very small commercial tax base
- Cautious/conservative spending
- AAA bond rating
- Need for “big ticket” capital projects
- Very little town-owned land to meet municipal needs
- DPW under-funded, under-staffed



sustainability

- Green Communities
- Energy conservation
- Stormwater management
- Bikeway
- Affordable housing
- Zero-commute jobs



circulation & traffic

- Arlington has 125± miles of roadways
- Well connected to regional road network
- Bikeway, sidewalks
- Bus service (mainly Massachusetts Avenue)
- Peak-period traffic congestion
- Private ways





direction

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vision

- Arlington's Master Plan envisions civic connections that encourage social interaction and foster a sense of community. The plan considers a range of critical topics by focusing on how they contribute to these connections ...



civic connections ... social interaction ... sense of community

- Open spaces and corridors that link neighborhoods
- Thriving business districts
- Living and working opportunities for all
- Stewardship and promotion of our historic heritage
- Cultural and recreational resources that provide shared experiences
- Natural systems in ecological balance
- A walkable public realm where residents meet their neighbors
- A shared interest in community-wide fiscal health

master plan goals

Land use

- Balance housing growth with other land uses
- Encourage development that enhances natural resources, built environment
- Support, expand the economic, cultural, and civic purposes of commercial areas

Circulation & traffic

- Enhance mobility and increase safety: maximize transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access
- Manage congestion safely and efficiently: improve traffic operations
- Manage supply of parking in commercial areas

master plan goals

Housing

- Encourage mixed-use development that includes affordable housing
- Provide a variety of housing options
- Preserve “streetcar suburb” neighborhood character
- Encourage sustainable construction

Economic development

- Support small, independent businesses
- Maximize buildout potential of nonresidential properties
- Promote Arlington’s historic and cultural assets
- Improve access to public transit and parking

master plan goals

Historic & cultural resource areas

- Maintain, protect, preserve, and promote historic and diverse cultural resources
- Provide attractive, well-maintained spaces for residents
- Promote arts and cultural activities

Public facilities & services

- Coordinate, efficiently deliver town services
- Build and maintain attractive facilities that minimize environmental impact and connect community
- Balance need for revenue with ability/willingness to pay
- Guide public facility investments through long-term capital planning

master plan goals

Natural resources & open space

- Use sustainable planning and engineering to improve air and water quality, reduce flooding, enhance ecological diversity
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Develop neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure in harmony with natural resources
- Value, protect, enhance Arlington's physical beauty and natural resources
- Treasure our open spaces, parks, recreational facilities and natural areas
- Expand recreational and athletic facilities, programs, opportunities
- Maintain and beautify parks, trails, play areas, and streetscapes



priority recommendations

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land use

1. Recodify/update Zoning Bylaw
2. Reduce special permits
3. Reorganize, consolidate business districts
4. Provide redevelopment incentives
5. Clarify mixed-use provisions

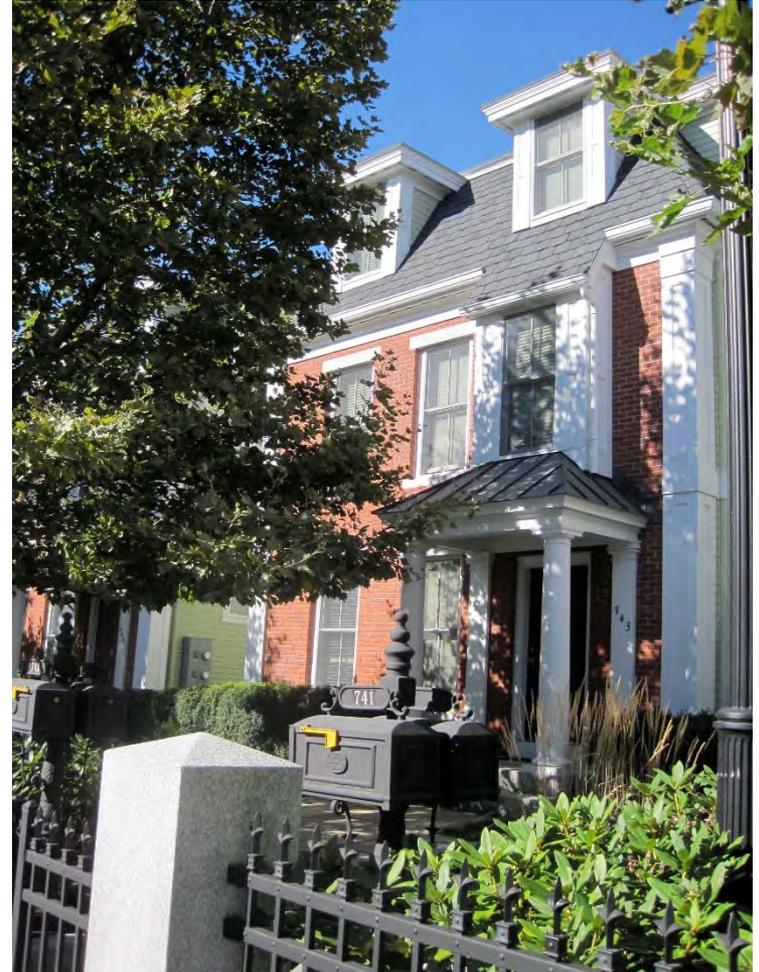
circulation & traffic



1. Create safer conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists
2. Improve conditions, access, safety on Minuteman Bikeway
3. Work with MBTA, MassDOT
4. Address parking
5. Reduce traffic congestion

housing

1. Affordable housing plan
2. Determine 1.5 percent land area status under Chapter 40B
3. Address quality, condition of aging housing stock
4. Assess “aging in place” needs



economic development

1. Enhance development flexibility in business districts
2. Update industrial district zoning
3. Promote co-work centers
4. Support “magnet” businesses
5. Implement the Koff report (Commercial Center Revitalization)

historic & cultural resource areas

- Develop historical, archeological resources survey: identify, prioritize needs
- Seek CLG status
- Expand education, advocacy
- Develop comprehensive preservation plan
- Preserve character of historic districts
- Protect town-owned buildings
- Develop cultural districts & resources plan

natural resources & open space

1. Develop comprehensive plan for Mill Brook
2. Address problems with street trees
3. Protect Mugar land – all or part of it – and consider TDR as implementation tool
4. Create bylaw to control invasive plant species



public facilities & services

1. Perform space needs analysis
2. Review condition of private ways
3. Establish surplus property process
4. Improve management & maintenance of town properties
5. Develop plan to meet long-term cemetery needs





discussion

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